



Foundation of the Alliance for Community Media Youth Media Initiative

Overview of Community Media Youth Programs:

The FCC's 2011 Report *Information Needs of Communities* noted that community media centers should consider shifting their mission toward teaching digital literacy, partnering with other institutions that provide nonprofit programming, and working to increase the transparency of government and other civic institutions. We agree, and have elevated digital literacy and youth media literacy as a core focus area.

Community Media Centers are mission-based organizations that provide a wide array of services and programming for local communities. Most centers manage one or more non-commercial cable channels and are “access” channels carried by the majority of cable television systems as well as some telecommunications companies. In recent years, community media has expanded its local production and distribution services to non-commercial and low power radio, Internet streaming, podcasts, social media and mobile applications. In many parts of the country, community media serves as the only remaining source for regular, relevant and current local news and information. Community media centers also provide workforce development training, public safety information and media services to area non-profits and individuals. In addition, community media centers often serve as the “launching pad” for people seeking media careers, and the workforce, board and management are much more reflective of their diverse communities.

One core competency of community media is youth media. Most centers – like many media arts organizations - maintain formal training programs for youth, and a growing number of innovative community media centers go beyond the traditional “hands on” how-to training to teach digital and media literacy – including digital storytelling, civic engagement, news reporting, community building/healing, life skills and technology/workforce skills for young people.

Several ACM members are exemplary leaders and key resources for youth literacy initiatives. By way of example

- **BRONXNET**, New York City - Open 2.0 is a teen version of a BRONXNET signature series. Produced by, for, and about teens, the show addresses the concerns and interests that affect high school students in the Bronx. Working with various Bronx high schools
- **SPNN, St. Paul, Minnesota** – *Set It Up* is a topic-driven TV show produced by Saint Paul high school students who produce, direct, shoot, edit, and explore issues in this after-school program. Additionally, *The Neighborhood Video Project*, in partnership with Saint Paul community organizations, filmmakers, and historians, works with middle school-aged youth to explore the history of their neighborhoods and produce videos about each community's unique challenges and possibilities. SPNN houses a formal Youth Media Department.
- **PHILLYCAM, Philadelphia, PA** - PhillyCam launched *Pushouts*, a youth-led multimedia reporting project, which was cablecast earlier this year. *Pushouts* video documentary was researched, written, shot and

edited by six YESPhilly students, and was followed by a panel discussion with the youth reporters and their media production and journalism mentors. Funded with support from J-Lab's Enterprise Reporting Fund the *Pushouts* project explores why young people of color are failing to graduate from Philadelphia public schools and what is being done at the community level to address the problem.

The Alliance for Community Media developed a multi-prong approach to shine a national spotlight on our members innovative and critical youth media programs, as well as grow youth media initiatives within centers and increase public understanding of the need for media literate youth.

PHASE ONE

Youth Media Symposiums – The ACM launched a series of public, one-day Symposiums. The first symposium was in Philadelphia May 8, 2012, the second in San Jose September 25, 2012, and the third in Minneapolis in February, 2013. The fourth symposium will likely be held in New York City 2nd half of 2013. The purpose of the symposiums is threefold: (i) to provide a public forum for discussion about youth media and the need to train students/provide students with tools in digital and media literacy, (ii) to discuss the role of local community media, libraries, public officials, schools, corporations, grantmakers and other partners; and (iii) to develop best practices and recommendations from these symposiums that can be used to develop and grow youth media programs at community media centers nationwide.

ACM National Conference – The ACM 2012 Conference in Chicago included a two-day track of workshops and presentations about youth media initiatives nationally, and specific activities in Chicago. Conference participants included Chicago Youth Voices, MacArthur, and various local Chicago and ACM organizations involved to lead the training. Topics covered everything from filmmaking as a means of engaging children at risk, training programs addressing online safety, privacy, publicity and reputation; and programming produced by youth about their lives, families and communities. The ACM is offering a full track of Youth Workshops at its 2013 San Francisco Conference which will include a review of the Youth Media Summit findings, how to start a youth media network, building a national coalition for youth media and screenings of Hometown youth winners.

PHASE TWO

White Paper of Community Media Youth Programs – Following the completion of the symposiums and conferences and subject to funding, the Foundation hopes to complete a white paper containing best practices and other opportunities and lessons learned from the symposiums, and outline recommendations for consideration by media organizations and public officials regarding digital and media literacy for young people.